



Public Services – Parks & Recreation

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021
COUNCIL WORK SESSION ROOM OF ANOKA CITY HALL
2015 FIRST AVENUE, ANOKA MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Nelson, Joe Anderla, Mike Clark, Mark Beckenbach, and Sam Scott

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Derek Sebesta, Mary Blankenship, and Terri Poe

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Julie Huspek

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa LaCasse, Public Services Administrator; Nickie Jenks, Recreation Manager and Jon Holmes, Public Services Supervisor

APPROVE MINUTES

There being no changes to the February meeting minutes. A motion **was made by Anderla, seconded by Scott to APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 23, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD.**

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried

OPEN FORUM

NEW BUSINESS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dog Park at Sunny

Anderla requested another board discussion regarding the dog park proposal at Sunny Acres Park. The discussion originally started in 2016, included in the packet is meeting minutes of all past conversations about the dog park. LaCasse explained the history of the discussion for the members who were not on the board at the time. She explained that if the dog park at sunny were ever to move forward, there is an area next to the proposed space that public services uses as a “dump” area for woodchips, construction debris, etc., and it is not a safe area for dogs to be roaming through. The dog park was originally thought that it would help with the issue of people not leashing or picking up their dogs waste when out in the City. The police department has recently updated their ticketing system to allow the security officers to ticket citizens whom do not have their dogs leashed, or are caught not picking up and disposing of the waste. Some other areas that have been considered over the years are Sorenson, John Ward, Mississippi Community Park, The Nature Preserve, and near the Cemetery. In 2017 the board voted that Sunny Acres would be the best spot for a dog park. Improvements, like adding a fence on the north end



for the residents, paving to connect the trail that is currently gravel, and a site clean-up would need to take place first in order to make this possible.

Anderla asked if using pig fencing is a cost-effective alternative, LaCasse agreed that is a good option. Anderla shared that he visited two dog parks recently, and doesn't know how a dog can be considered "under control" if they run up to whomever opens the gate. Beckenbach explained that since it's a dog park and fenced in, dogs running up to other people and dogs is accepted in this setting. Anderla suggested just having some parks that allow residents to have dogs to be off leashes and run as long as they pick up after themselves, putting in an actual dog park may not be worth the time and money for that area. Holmes explained that people like to go to dog parks, it makes them feel safer allowing their dogs to run knowing that they won't escape. LaCasse mentioned she used to be a regular dog park user, and noticed that the people who don't pick up outside of a dog park still don't pick up inside of one and that it doesn't change much. There is concern from a maintenance standpoint because the area is so hilly. There will be a natural congregation of people, and since owners won't have a clear visual of their dogs at all times, waste will be left behind. About fifty percent of dog park users bring dogs to the parks for the dogs exercise, and not their own. If a group of people were to adopt and take care of the park, it would help with the maintenance. Anderla mentioned that people will go to other cities and don't mind travelling to a dog park.

An aerial from google maps was shared on the screen. LaCasse showed the areas that would need to be fenced off to block the park from the trail, and the residents on the north side. Beckenbach brings up putting a trail in the proposed dog park. LaCasse stated that they could start with the southern section shown on the screen, but it is a hilly area. Anderla mentioned that the parking lot would be on the other side of the park, people would have to walk down the trail to access the park.

Anderla brought up the idea of using the space next to the ball field at Mississippi River Community Park. It provides parking and it has a flat topography so that people can keep their dogs in view. This area is a better fit for what he saw at the two parks he had visited. LaCasse reminded the board that the Westin Woods neighborhood was not in favor of a dog park when residents were asked. Beckenbach brought up Minnehaha Dog Park, the topography is hilly, with lots of trees, and paths going through. Having an area like that would in Sunny would be better than Mississippi, as that would just be another place for people to throw a ball for their dog. Scott mentioned putting an urban dog park in somewhere, something that is smaller. LaCasse brought up the dog park that is at the apartment complex next to Mississippi Park, it used to be a tennis court but they renovated it into a dog park for the apartments residents use only. Sometimes those small parks can become toxic quickly as there is less space for urine and waste, woodchips get put down frequently and eventually the whole site becomes toxic.

Nelson stated that the board has been talking about a dog park in the city for 10 years, he thinks there is quite the opposition from the residents for a dog park. All the areas mentioned now, were in opposition then. There hasn't been an expressed need for residents wanting a dog park. He brought up the hockey boards for something temporary, maybe they could just be put up in an open area to allow the dogs to run. 100ft wide by 200ft long would be sufficient for a dogs exercise. Anderla suggested linking up with another community that has more space.

LaCasse reminded the board that the PD is now set up to educate and enforce the leash and picking up waste laws. Good mitigation is education and maybe putting up more signage. Doggie bags will not be provided because they can be expensive, Ramsey spent \$10,000 in just bags in one year after they installed bag dispensers. Nelson suggested just getting more garbage cans, it can help encourage people to pick it up if they know they won't have to walk far holding the bag of waste.

Blankenship likes Anderla's idea, other communities have more space, there is not a public outcry for a dog park, and the proposed locations don't have great parking. Scott added that the demand for a dog

park may increase in the future, as the younger generations are having less children and more pets. Anderla doesn't think we need a dog park, but ordinances should be changed to mitigate our dog issues. Nelson doesn't think the community and the need is right at this point. LaCasse added that the main issues happen in the Cemetery.

A motion was made by Beckenbach to TABLE THE DOG PARK AT SUNNY TO A LATER DATE, Scott seconded. 8 – AYES, 0 – OPPOSED. Motion carried.

Rudy Johnson Park / Building Option

Included in the packet is an example of the building that LaCasse and Holmes are proposing to the board. They were able to get a quote put together for the cost of the building, it is a pre-fabricated cedar building, providing ample inside space (26'X17') with an attached shelter, heating, water, and two, one stall bathrooms. The shelter would be able to hold 5-6 picnic tables, seating 24-30 people. The quoted price for the building alone is \$142,000. The quote does not include the foundation, footings, building installation, electrical, plumbing, and finish work. LaCasse explains that this is the most economical option that they have found. The building should have a decent life-span, which includes regular scheduled maintenance. Spring Brook Nature Center in Fridley, MN installed the building from the same manufacturer last year, only theirs was twice the size. LaCasse and Holmes toured the building recently to make sure that this is really the best option. Pictures were shown that Fridley shared, of the construction processes and the finished product.

There are currently only \$150,000 in the budget for 2021, allocated for purchasing the building and all installation aspects listed earlier. The City is still waiting for the \$150,000 that the school district agreed upon, in lieu of a lease agreement between the City and the Physical Education Department at Washington Middle School stating they can use the park for 20 years. LaCasse is still waiting for the district to sign the agreement, the two individuals within the school district that had originally agreed on this have since retired. There is hope that the delay of signing the agreement is due to the pandemic and the transition of new people into those roles, and that they will still sign the agreement and assist with the improvement costs at Rudy. If the commitment is not signed by October, LaCasse wants to purchase the building, store the materials somewhere, and allocate funds in spring of 2022 to install and finish the building. If this is the case, there will be no warming house again for the winter of 2021-2022.

LaCasse explained that building orientation would make the bathroom doors visible from Polk Street. The bathrooms can be locked from both the inside and the outside. Allowing for winter use from the inside, and summer use from the outside. Air conditioning could be added, since the building will be insulated and it allows the building to be rented all year long. The building would have a metal roof, electronic door locks can be installed, and the exterior can either be stained and sealed, or just clear sealed. Beckenbach brings up the lumber prices that have increased substantially over the past year, and asked if anything needs to be locked in with the manufacturing company. LaCasse doesn't think they will change the price from what is on the quote from this year. Scott asks if stone work along the lower half of the buildings' exterior wall will help mitigate future rot. LaCasse can get a quote for what stone work would be, that might be able to be added later on as well.

Ultimately LaCasse is looking for approval from the board to move forward with purchasing the proposed building. This is the most cost effective choice for the price range and building size that was originally allocated for the building in the Master Plan, Bolton & Menk has scoured the market for prefab structures within the budget. The total cost for installation of the building will bring the total cost to just under \$300,000. The building fits the area, and can easily be seen from the highway. Scott asks what the lifetime of the exterior is, LaCasse tried to find information on the manufacturers website but it was vague. LaCasse will reach out to them to get the expected life span of the material. Anderla asks how much it would cost to add another stall for each bathroom, so there a two stalls in each. It would add an

estimated \$50,000, the whole footprint of the building would need to be larger, otherwise it would be taking away from the inside space.

A motion was made by Beckenbach to PROCEED WITH THE SMOOTH CEDAR BUILDING PRODUCT WITH A METAL ROOF, WHETHER THE DISTRICT FOLLOWS THROUGH WITH THE FUND AGREEMENT, Clark Seconded. 7 – AYES, 1 – OPPOSED.

Nelson inquired as to why Anderla is opposed to the motion that Beckenbach made. Anderla is opposed due to only one stall in each bathroom. LaCasse pulled up a bigger option that was drawn up and quoted, which was \$192,000 just for the pre-fabricated building, which includes two toilets for the women, and a toilet and a urinal for the men. Anderla stated that we need to plan for the future, even if the money isn't in the budget right now. LaCasse shared that \$300,000 was originally budgeted for the building, but that was with the \$800,000 budget request for the park which has been cut. The motion made by Beckenbach was withdrawn, LaCasse is to get more information that was requested. The topic is tabled for the next Park Board meeting in April.

Station Cove/Park

LaCasse drafted an RFP for a playground and a shelter for station cove. The request includes a nature inspired theme, a \$65,000 budget for equipment, \$125,000 is the total budget in the RFP. The budget allows for additional money left over for a foundation of a shelter, a border, and fall surfacing. \$50,000 was already spent for the dredging of the pond/inlet off of the river. Scott suggested that the City could partner with a company like Vista Outdoors for extra money. LaCasse stated that she thinks this park would be a good source for the DNR recreation grant. The grant is closed for this year, but can be applied for next year. The park fits the model of what these DNR grants will pay for. David Weekly has an expectation that a park will be there about the same time they are finishing up the builds. Parking will need to be closer to 4th Ave, and plans have been made to keep the parking separate from the snow pile that needs to go in the area during winter. Poe suggested integrating something that models the lawns to legumes program. The board agreed that a shelter really isn't needed at the moment and just send out the RFP for the playground, and have the shelter as an 'add on' to the proposal.

Winter Activities Report

The total attendance for all rinks in 2021 was 4,450. With attendance up at George Enloe Park (2,241) and Wilson (1,163). Enloe was open for 8 weeks because of the sledding hill, and every other rink was open for 6 weeks.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mississippi River Shoreline Rehabilitation Project Update

The council approved going out for bid for the project, but a request for a bid alternative to include large river-rock type boulder, instead of the more rugged rocks like granite to allow for better aesthetic. ACD has specified that angular rocks of different sizes be used for better "locking" together and stabilization. April 15th is the bid opening for the project.

During plan development staff and engineers consulted with Sauter & Sons, a local company that has completed many riverbank stabilization projects on the Mississippi River, and it was recommended that angular type rock be used with a top cap to help mitigate any water that could get over the wall and then would create a blowout.

LaCasse will bring the bid information for the project to the park board at the April meeting.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

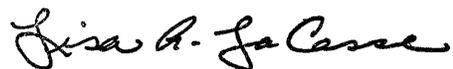
Capital Improvement Plan / Budget 2022

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, **a motion was made by Scott, seconded by Clark, to ADJOURN THIS REGULAR MEETING. 6 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.**

Time of adjournment 9:27 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa LaCasse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lisa LaCasse
Public Services Administrator